

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., SEPTEMBER 3, 1920.

The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1921 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., Friday, September 3, 1920.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman;
Mr. Platt;
Mr. Pope;
Mr. Fraser;

also Major C. S. Ridley, Secretary and
Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETINGS: The minutes of the meeting held in Washington, D. C., July 9, 1920, and of the Committee meeting held in New York City July 27, 1920, were approved.

2. MEMORIAL TABLET, STATE, WAR AND NAVY BUILDING: Major Ridley reported that there had been submitted to him a drawing of a war memorial tablet to be presented by the American Red Star Animal Relief, of which Dr. W. O. Stillman is Director General, and for which a place approximately 10' x 10' square has been authorized in the State, War and Navy Building. The tablet is to be in bronze 40" x 48" in size. The design had been submitted to Mr. Fraser who recommended modifications in it. The tablet is to commemorate the services and sufferings of 243,133 horses and mules employed by the American Expeditionary Forces over seas during the World War.

The Commission suggested that the drawing be returned to the designer and that his attention be called to the fact that the tablet is for use on a wall and not on the ground (as appeared from the design) and therefore the base

should be modified. The design for the sculpture should be submitted in the form of a model rather than as a sketch on paper. Mr. Pope was asked to take up personally with the architect these suggestions.

3. PLYMOUTH MEMORIAL COIN: On August 23, 1920, the Commission received from the Director of the Mint photographs for the proposed Plymouth Memorial Coin with a statement that an immediate decision was desired from the Commission. The model was made in plaster by Cyrus E. Dallin, sculptor, of Boston, and showed the head of a Puritan on the obverse and the Mayflower on the reverse. The Director of the Mint had advised that the Plymouth Memorial Committee was in a great hurry to place these coins on the market, that Congress had authorized making 300,000 of them and that it would be necessary to proceed with the coining at once.

The Commission did not consider the design as being good and felt an improvement ought to be made at least in the lettering. The Commission particularly regretted the exceedingly great haste in this matter in view of the opportunity for a splendid piece of work and returned the submission to the Director of the Mint without action. (Exhibit A).

4. ERICSSON MEMORIAL: The Commission officially approved the model for the Ericsson Memorial to be erected in Washington, D. C., not far from the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. James E. Fraser, sculptor.

5. JEANNE D'ARC MEMORIAL: The Commission gave consideration to the question of selecting a suitable location for the Jeanne D'Arc Memorial. Of several sites considered the Commission thought the site in front of the Red Cross Building would be the most appropriate of the sites that may be available at the present time. It was reported that the Red Cross had expressed its desire to have the statue in front of their building.

6. MEADE MEMORIAL: Mr. Moore reported that he had seen Mr. Charles

Grafly, sculptor of the Meade Memorial, recently, who advised him that the work on the Meade Statue at his studio was being advanced as rapidly as possible, and that he was devoting a great deal of his time to the statue, but he protested against being hurried in the completion of it. The Commission decided that Mr. Grafly should be allowed all the time he would need for the proper completion of his work on this Memorial. The Commission took under advisement suggestions made with regard to the inscriptions and decided that they should be brief. Final action with regard to the inscriptions is to be taken at a subsequent meeting. (Exhibit B).

7. VERDUN MEMORIAL: Major Ridley reported that under date of August 11, 1920, he had sent a letter to each member of the Commission asking for suggestions and criticisms on a program of competition to be submitted by the Secretary of War to the sculptors proposed for the Verdun Medal, and that the members had given general approval of the plan.

Under date of August 11th the War Department advised the Commission that the Secretary of War had approved an allotment of \$3,000 from the appropriation for contingencies for the Army for the fiscal year 1921 for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Act of Congress concerning the Verdun Medal. The Commission gave formal approval to the program of competition, a copy of which is to be sent to each of the eight sculptors by the War Department. (Exhibit C).

8. CASKEY MONUMENT AT ARLINGTON: Under date of August 16, 1920, the Assistant Secretary of War submitted to the Commission a design for the monument proposed to be erected on the lot assigned to Commander G. L. Caskey, U. S. Navy. The Commission decided that a monument according to the design submitted would not be suitable for Arlington and disapproved the design. The Assistant Secretary of War was advised accordingly. (Exhibit D).

9. AMERICAN CEMETERIES IN FRANCE: Major C. C. Pierce, Chief of the Graves Registration Service, War Department, appeared before the Commission and advised that the War Department contemplates establishing three American Cemeteries in France -- (Suresnes, Belleau Wood, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon), and for which tentative plans had been drawn. Suresnes, in the vicinity of Paris, contains about 4,000 graves, and the one at Romagne about 20,000. Under order of Congress and the Secretary of War bodies of our American soldiers buried in the Allied countries are now being returned to the United States and they now have the big task of gathering the remains of our soldiers that are buried in many out-of-the-way places "where they fell" into these proposed National Cemeteries. Major Pierce said that before proceeding further in this work, and as Secretary of the War Memorial Council, he was submitting the matter to the Commission of Fine Arts for approval of a design for these cemeteries. Major Pierce said the sum of thirty million dollars was appropriated by Congress for the work of caring for the remains of our soldiers.

The Commission decided that plans for these cemeteries should be prepared by the very best architects and landscape architects whom it is possible to secure. (Exhibit E).

Mr. Moore reported that at a recent meeting of the War Memorial Council in the office of the Secretary of War Monday, August 30, 1920, the Council ordered the placing of the headstone for graves, designed by Mr. Charles A. Platt, on all graves of our soldiers who died in the World War whether buried abroad or in this country. Major Pierce reported that he did not think for the present more than two thousand of those who died abroad would be buried in Arlington. However, in succeeding years this number would be continually increased as soldiers who served in the World War would be entitled to a burial place at Arlington. It was, therefore, thought desirable to develop the World War section so that it

might be of as good an appearance as other parts of Arlington.

10. ESTIMATE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF GROUNDS, ARMY WAR COLLEGE: Major J. B. Gowen, Executive Officer of the War College, requested the advice of the Commission with regard to an estimate which he may place in his Statement of Estimates for the improvement of grounds about the Army War College as proposed in the plan of the Commission, particularly on the south side. The Commission recommended the planting of a sufficient number of elm trees, according to the plan, of fair size, and that he ask for not less than \$3,000 for the beginning of the work.

11. ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL: Mr. Moore reported that he had visited Mrs. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay the latter part of August regarding the Roosevelt Memorial, particularly with regard to the site, and that he showed Mrs. Roosevelt a number of views of the proposed site for the Memorial at Sixteenth Street Heights. As a result of the interview Mr. Moore said that Mrs. Roosevelt expressed herself as being well pleased with the proposed site for the Memorial. The Commission suggested that inquiry be made with regard to grading, especially for the proposed Circle, and that it be suggested to the Roosevelt Memorial Commission that an option on the land be secured.

12. TENTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER, COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: Mr. Moore reported having received letters from former members of the Commission suggesting a tenth anniversary dinner for the present and former members of the Commission some time this Fall. The Commission thought the suggestion should be carried out and suggested that it take place the latter part of October or early in November.

13. ZERO MILE STONE: Drawings were submitted by the architect showing in detail designs as revised according to previous recommendations. In general the design was approved as submitted.

The Commission recommended the elimination of incised lettering from top and addition of information as to longitude, latitude and sea-level to edge of compass; also indication of compass points by engraving rather than by relief. The following inscriptions for the milestone were approved:

North side: Zero Milestone. Insignia of Motor Transport Corps;
South side: Point for the Measurement of Distances from
Washington, D. C., on highways of the United States;
East side: Starting point of second transcontinental motor
convoy, over the Bankhead Highway, June 14, 1920;
West side: Starting point of first transcontinental motor convoy
over the Lincoln Highway, July 7, 1919.

It was also recommended that the rectangular framing of the Motor Transport Insignia be omitted and that the size of the circle be slightly increased. The modelling of the insignia is to show at least as much depth as the letters above. The milestone is to be four feet high. This height is necessary to permit proper placing of the inscriptions on the stone, which have the approval of the Secretary of War. The location between the present and proposed walk line was approved.

The Commission require the submission of a model showing the north side before authorizing procedure.

The Commission further suggest that assurance be given to the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds that funds have been provided sufficient for the erection of the memorial before authorizing use of the design with their approval.

14. MERIDIAN HILL PARK: The model of the lower section of Meridian Hill Park was shown to the Commission by the architect, Mr. Peaslee. Mr. Vitale, the landscape architect, was present; also Mr. Schuler, sculptor of the Buchanan Memorial, and Mr. Beecher, the architect.

The Buchanan Memorial was first viewed in relation to the garden. The

question of the placing of the flanking statues was discussed and their position was approved as originally located. The location of the four garden elms was changed to line up with the lateral copings of the pool. The elevation of the Memorial was increased by the addition of two steps to its base. It was recommended that the grade of the platform be carefully studied.

A discussion followed about the surface treatment of the lower garden. The Commission recommended the preparation of samples of fine gravel or broken stone walks not bound with cement.

Major Ridley reported that objection had been made by the Appropriations Committee to constructing walls around the park which were not necessary for retaining purposes, and raised the question as to the possibility of eliminating some which were not necessary for retaining purposes. The Commission, however, pointed out that since nearly the entire park needed walls for retaining purposes the approved plan for constructing walls about the park should be carried out for the general effect and for the protection of the planting. Attention was especially directed to the fact that the long walks on the upper level needed definite terminal motifs within the park proper in order to prevent objectionable terminal motifs being furnished on properties outside of the park control.

Attention having been directed by the architect to the unpleasant glare on the upper mall walks, alternative schemes were submitted by the landscape architect for the provision of additional shade -- the use of the coupled cedars on the inside of the walks as well as the outside; the use of deciduous trees at regular intervals on both sides of the walks; the use of deciduous trees informally placed in the border planting, but branching over the hedges; and the use of a formal line of oaks back of the hedge line, carrying through the general effect of the oak grove at the head of the mall. The latter scheme was approved.

Mr. Vitale stated that after discussing the matter with Mr. Greenleaf they had eliminated all the large deciduous trees from the hillside planting flank-

ing the cascade and that the mass planting would now be all pine.

15. EAST POTOMAC PARK, DÉTAIL PLANTING PLAN: A detail planting plan of the entire eighteen-hole golf course was presented showing an informal planting of broad-leaved evergreen and deciduous trees. It was felt by Mr. Greenleaf that the use of the White Oak was preferable to certain trees of the Willow family and this change was therefore made and embodied in the plan as approved. The plan was approved on the basis that no existing trees interfered with the present tree locations proposed and that such interfering trees, when removed through death or injury, were to be filled with the trees as called for on the planting plan. The restriction of the planting to comparatively few kinds of trees and the featuring of the use of the various oaks and elms were warmly recommended.

Road Cross Section: A road cross section of the proposed 30 foot informal road north of the future Boating Channel in East Potomac Park was presented, showing an integral cement curb and gutter designed as to make the sharp demarcation of the line between Grass and curbing less pronounced. This was approved by the Commission.

16. THE MALL: The Mall profiles of the four main drives, viz., the North Drive, the North Vista Drive, the South Drive, and the South Vista Drive, were presented showing the above profiles from Fourteenth Street to Second Street and the Grant Memorial. These profiles as far east as Third Street were those approved several years ago by Mr. F. L. Olmsted in collaboration with Mr. Chas. P. Punchard, Landscape Architect, and were further amplified by later profiles through the Botanic Garden, based on studies during the year. The Commission requested that a statement be secured from Mr. Olmsted as to whether he accepts the figures shown on the profiles as correct, and suggested that the profiles be sent to him for this purpose. Mr. Greenleaf withheld approval until he could personally verify the existing conditions on the ground, inasmuch as some of the

present topography has been changed owing to the temporary war buildings, particularly between Sixth and Seventh Streets.

Typical Road Cross Sections and Walks: Two typical cross sections of the proposed 30 foot and 35 foot drives to be built longitudinally on the Mall were presented; also a section of the proposed temporary 10 foot cement walk with its accompanying temporary cement gutter and providing for an ultimate permanent width of 15 feet with a cement gutter of 13 inches width as per detail. This plan was approved by the Commission.

17. **FREER ART GALLERY:** The curbing outline was slightly modified on the grounds by Major Ridley and Mr. Platt to remove the apparent sudden reverse by using a longer radius at the point of tangency. This was approved by Mr. Platt, the architect. It was also recommended by Mr. Platt that the south entrance walk be widened to the total outside width of the smaller doors on each side of the main entrance doors. It was further recommended by Mr. Platt that the entire line of elm trees immediately south of this structure be removed and the planting area replanted with large American elms; and further that the ground be regraded to conform to a suitable grade between the building and the existing brick sidewalk along B Street south. It was also suggested by Mr. Platt that the large tree appearing in the parking near the intersection of the South Drive and Twelfth Street, and marked for removal on the grading plan, be removed, so that the usual sidewalk and parking slope of 1/4" per foot from the curb could be maintained.

Major C. C. Pierce, Chief of the Graves Registration Service, was the guest of the Commission at the luncheon. Later in the afternoon the Commission made an inspection trip to the proposed site for the Jeanne D'Arc Memorial in front of the Red Cross Building, the Zero Milestone, and visited the Freer Gallery of Art and Meridian Hill Park.

Approved:

September 7, 1920.

Sir:

With reference to the submission of the design for the Plymouth Memorial Coin, the Commission at its meeting on September 3, 1920, requested me to advise you as follows:

The Commission of Fine Arts regret that the design for the Plymouth Memorial Coin was submitted to the Commission at such a late date that there was no opportunity to confer with the designer for the purpose of making suggestions calculated to bring the work in harmony with the standards worked out in connection with the subsidiary silver coinage. This, the Commission feel, is a loss to the artist not less than to the public and to the prestige of the Mint. The submission is, therefore, returned without action.

The Commission respectfully suggest:

1. That as a part of the procedure in the case of memorial coins, the Director of the Mint make regulations requiring that a person of experience and ability in designing coins or medals be selected as the designer;
2. That a sum sufficient to secure the services of a designer of high ability be set apart for the payment of the design;
3. That not less than three months be given to the designer for the preparation of the model;
4. That the model be submitted to the National Commission of Fine Arts for approval, with the understanding that the sculptor may consult the Commission during the progress of his work.

Memorial coins should represent in the very highest degree the ability of the United States Mint. These coins, if well-designed and well-executed, become a portion of American history. If ill-designed and poorly executed, they are a reflection on American taste. It is not an answer to say that these coins quickly disappear from circulation and are lost to the world, - rather the assertion is in itself an argument for a perfection of our coinage, because the fine coins of the world belong quite as much to history as they do to numismatics, and they endure for centuries.

Respectfully, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Hon. Raymond T. Baker,
Director of the Mint,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

September 4, 1920.

Dear Mr. Grafly:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting yesterday gave careful consideration to your suggestion as to additional time for work on the Meade Memorial. The Commission feel that the excellent progress you are making, the intricate and exacting character of the design, and the high promise shown in the model, make the question of time of completion of secondary consideration. You should be permitted the time necessary to carry your design to perfection. The Commission also believe that the inscriptions should not be used on the pedestal, unless for decorative effect, of which you are the judge in the first instance.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Charles Grafly, Esq.,

Folly Cove, Lanesville Station,

Gloucester, Massachusetts.

EXHIBIT B.

VERDUN MEMORIAL.

The Secretary of War asked the Commission of Fine Arts to assist him to secure a design for the Verdun Memorial, as provided for in the Army Appropriation Act, approved June 5, 1920:

"That the President be, and he is hereby authorized, in the name of the Congress and people of the United States, to present to the city of Verdun, France, a suitable memorial medal or tablet as a mark of America's appreciation of the valor of its defenders, the cost to be paid from the appropriation for contingencies of the Army."

The Commission of Fine Arts advised that:

- (1) The Verdun Memorial take the form of a medal four inches in diameter, of gold, cast.
- (2) The design of the obverse should be left to the artist, except that it shall bear the inscription "From the people of the United States to the City of Verdun".
- (3) The reverse to bear a representation of La Porte Chaussee of Verdun, with the inscription "Ils ne passeront pas".
- (4) The models to be in plaster. The design to be submitted actual size (4 in.), either by direct modelling or reduction.
- (5) The model submitted shall be securely wrapped and addressed to Mr. James E. Fraser, 3 Macdougall Alley, New York City, in plain lettering, with no other lettering thereon, and delivered at this address not later than December 31, 1920. With each model must be enclosed a plain opaque sealed envelope, without any superscription or mark of any kind; the envelope to contain the name and address of the competitor.
- (6) The following sculptors to be asked to participate in the competition:

Robert Aitken
Chester Beach
John Flanagan
Anthony de Francisci

Sherry Fry
Henry Hering
Anna V. Hyatt
Paul Manship

(7) The sum of one hundred dollars to be paid to each competitor.

(8) The sum of fifteen hundred dollars to be paid to the person selected to execute the medal. The gold will be furnished by the Government.

(9) The design to be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts, and Mr. Daniel Chester French, and Mr. Herbert Adams, former sculptor members of the Commission, to be associated with the Commission in reaching a decision.

It is requested that no mention of this competition shall be made in the press excepting by the authority of the Secretary of War.

September 4, 1920.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts acknowledge the submission by you on August 16 of a design for a monument to be erected in Arlington National Cemetery on the lot assigned to Commander G. L. Caskey, U. S. Navy. You request advice as to whether the design meets the approval of the Commission, reference being made to paragraphs 5 to 13 of circular letter, dated August 5, 1916, containing the regulations on this subject.

The Commission respectfully report: That the plan for the Caskey monument complies with the regulations as to size. The design, however, is in violation of paragraph 9. The design is of an unusual florid character; it lacks the essential elements of good proportions and altogether is in absolutely bad taste for any cemetery, and especially for a military cemetery. The effect of setting up such a monument in Arlington would be most disturbing to all the monuments in its vicinity. For these reasons the design is disapproved by the Commission.

The Commission enclose a report discussing with some detail the subject of monuments at Arlington as a guide to the Caskey family in the matter of securing an appropriate design.

Respectfully, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Hon. W. R. Williams,

Assistant Secretary of War.

EXHIBIT D.

September 4, 1920.

My dear Major Pierce:

The Commission of Fine Arts acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 18, transmitting blue-prints of the three American cemeteries in France which the War Department proposes to develop as permanent cemeteries. The Commission also appreciate your courtesy in conferring with them on this subject at their meeting September 3.

After receiving very full information from you the Commission discussed at length the subject of the development of these cemeteries and reached the unanimous conclusion that it is essential that the plans for these cemeteries be prepared by the very best architects and landscape architects whom it is possible to secure. The Commission are also unanimously of the opinion that the course proposed will save the Government a very considerable expense, will provide against the exhibition of bad taste on the part of the people who do not appreciate the sacred and memorial character of the work to be undertaken, and will be a true expression of those deep feelings which we as a Nation owe to those of our soldiers who are buried in France. The Commission will be pleased to confer with you in regard to having the Secretary of War take up this fundamental matter and make such arrangements, both financial and otherwise, as shall carry out the suggestions in spirit and in letter.

Sincerely, yours,

(signed) C. S. Ridley,

Major, Corps of Engineers,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

Major C. C. Pierce, U. S. A.,
Secretary, War Memorials Council,
War Department.

EXHIBIT E.

